Imprimatur

Tho. Grig. R. P. D.
Episc. Lond. Sac.

Sept. 28.
1664.

Imprimatur

Tho. Grig. R. P. D.
Episc. Lond. Sac.

Sept. 28.
1664.

A CAVEAT AGAINST SEDVCERS:

As it was Preached

BY

RICHARD STANDFAST Master of ARTS, and RECTOR of Christ-Church in BRISTOL.

Whereunto are Annexed

The Blind Mans Meditations.

By the same Author.

There is none so blind, as he that will not see.

LONDON,
Printed by *Tho. Mabb*, for *Edward Thomas*, at the *Adam* and *Eve* in *Little Brittain*, 1664.

Imprimatur

Tho. Grigg. R. P. D.
Episc. Lond. Sac.

Sept. 28.
1664.

TO THE
Courteous Reader.

Courteous Reader;

THE continual declining of my Sun, and decay of my Sight, as it threatens mee with blindness, so it warns me to provide for my Night approaching: This moved me to consider with myself how I might lay up somewhat in store for the time to come, which might be for my Support and Comfort in so sad a Condition. Hereupon I Composed some few Copies of Verses, which when I had Imparted to some of my Friends for their Approbation, they much importuned me to make them Publique, for the benefit of others in the like Condition. I was at last prevailed withall: But being loath

to suffer so Inconsiderable a Piece, as I judge the Verses to be, to paß alone, I was willing to prefix some Sermon or other, which might be for more Publique Advantage; and being doubtful what to fasten upon, the perswasion of Friends hath drawn this from me which here follows, which I consented to the more willingly, because there is some correspondence and agreement between the one and the other: For as the one tends to the Comforting of the blind; so the other tends to the curing of such as through ignorance and errour have been led out of the Way.

This brief account, Courteous Reader, I thought good to give thee of the Printing of both; that which I now desire of thee is to read the Sermon diligently, to accept the Verses candidly, and to judge of both charitably. If thou find any benefit by either, bless God, and pray for him, who is

Thine in the Lord Jesus,

RICHARD STANDFAST.

A CAVEAT AGAINST SEDUCERS.

MATTH. 24. 4.

Take heed that no Man deceive you.

THese are the words of our Blessed Saviour to his Disciples, warning them to beware of being led aside by the cunning craftiness of such as lye in wait to deceive. And if Christ thought it fit, to give such a Caution to his

own Disciples, you need not think much, if we call upon you, in the same words, to take heed that no Man deceive you. The Caution, I confess, points directly to the matter proposed, in the former Verse; (*Scil.*) *The time, and the signe of the Coming of Christ, and of the End of the World*; Concerning which, Christs bids them to take heed, that no Man deceive them; Howbeit the words are not so to be restrained to the matter here in hand, but that they call for the like care upon all like occasions. And indeed, it is a duty that lies upon all Christians, *To take heed what they hear, and to beware of Deceivers.* And this is a Truth most plain and evident by those frequent Caveats, which we meet withal in the Book of God. As for Instance, *Beware of False Prophets*, Mat. 7. 15. *Beware of the*

Scribes, Mark 12. 38. *Beware lest any Man spoyl you through Phylosophy*, Col. 2. 8. *Beware lest you be drawn away with the errour of the Wicked*, 2 Pet. 3. 17. And so likewise, 2 *Thes.* 2. 3. *Take heed that no man deceive you by any means*, which words are very Full, and very Emphatical; for sometimes we may be deceived with the *Man*, sometimes with the *Means*. Sometimes with the *Man*; If he be one, of whom we have so good an opinion, both for his Parts, and for his piety, that we judge him too wise, to be deceived himself, and too honest, to deceive others; the Authority of such a Man may easily betray us into an errour. *Magnos errores magnorum virorum authoritate transmittimus*; We never err more securely, than when we follow a Guide, who we presume, we may safely Trust. Thus nil

the conceit of St. *Peters* worth raised him so high in the Repute of the People, that his Example did, as it were, compell them to follow him, as appears by *Gal.* 2. 13. Thus sometimes the *Man* may deceive us. Sometimes also the *Means* may deceive us, which *Means* are various, as will appear more fully in the following part of this Discourse. But the Apostle would not, that any *Man* should deceive us by any *Means*; 'Tis not the *Man*, but the *Matter* that must be regarded, nor should we suffer any *Man* to withdraw us from the Truth.

Many more like Caveats we may finde in St. *Pauls* Epistles, from the frequency of which we may very well Collect, either some more than ordinary proneness in us to be mis-led; or some more than ordinary danger in fal-

ling away from our own ſteadfaſtneſs. And by all it will appear how much it concerns every one of us, *To take heed that no Man deceive us.*

And if we look well into the matter, we ſhall finde a great deal of Reaſon to make us all very carefull in this behalf.

Reaſon I. The firſt Reaſon may be taken from our own proneneſs to Errour. Green Fruits, and ſuch like Traſh are more deſireable, and more delightfull to depraved appetites, than wholſome Food; and ſuch depraved appetites have we all had, ever ſince our Firſt Parents taſted of the forbidden Fruit; their eating ſet our teeth on edge; and our Natural Corruption hath a ſtronger bias in it toward perverſe Opinions, than it hath toward ſound Doctrine; partly becauſe it is

very much a ſtranger to Truth, and partly becauſe it is very much deſirous of Novelty.

1. Our Naturall Corruption is very much a ſtranger to Truth; Our Bleſſed Saviour ſaith, *I am come in my Fathers Name, and ye receive me not, if another ſhall come in his own Name, him ye will receive*, John 5. 43. From whence by the way we may obſerve, That Seducers need not boaſt of the Multitude of their Proſelytes, as if that ſucceſs of theirs were a ſufficient witneſs of their walking in the Truth; Nor need the Meſſengers of the Truth be diſcouraged at their cold Entertainment in the World, as if that were enough to prove, that they were not ſent of God; for Chriſts own Diſciples may fiſh all night, and catch nothing, when the nets of falſe Apoſtles may be ready to break

break through the multitude of fishes; And Christ himself may not have so welcome a Reception, as a false Prophet; For so he saith himself in the place alledged, which though it may seem strange at the first, yet upon a serious survey, the wonder will vanish. For Christ, coming in his Fathers Name, brings nothing but Truth with him, and therefore no wonder if he be neglected; But they that come in their own Names, bring Falsehood, and Lies, and therefore like to be the better welcome; For Truth hath no such party within us, as Errour hath; Errour is nearer of kin to our Corruption, than Truth is, and therefore like to find a more chearfull Entertainment. There is no *tinder* in our Nature, to catch one *spark* of Truth; but there is *Oyle* enough

enough in it to feed the *wild-fire* of Errour, and quickly to heighten it into a flame. Are not Heresies listed among the works of the Flesh? *Gal.* 5. 19, 20. No marvel then if our Corrupt Nature be more prone to receive False-hood than Truth; and because it is so prone, we have the more reason to take heed to our selves, lest we be deceived.

2. Besides this, *Est natura hominum novitatis avida*; In meats we love varieties; in cloaths we are for new fashions; and in Religion too, we are apt to be taken with new modes and wayes, though the old be better; But as scratching, to them that are troubled with the Itch, though it may be pleasing for the present, yet it will smart afterwards; So they, whose itching eares, *Athenian-like*, are delighted with novelties, will

will finde it bitterness in the latter end; for 'tis the way to grow weary of sound and wholesome Doctrine, and that fits them to be an easie prey for false Prophets. And therefore, seeing our natural distemper gives Heretical tenents such advantage against us, we had need to look about us with the greater care, lest we be deceived.

Reason II. A second Reason may be drawn from the Apostacy of other Men, whom we share with, both in Constitution and Deserts. Our Saviour saith in the Verse after my Text; *That many shall come in his Name, and shall deceive many*; And St. *Peter* having made mention of False Teachers, 2 *Pet.* 2. 1. In the very next Verse, saith, *That many shall follow their pernicious ways*; And experience can testifie the Truth

of

of these Predictions; for many have been led aside, and therefore beware! lest you also fall from your own steadfastness; so adviseth St. *Peter*, 2 *Epist.* 3. 17. If others have been seduced, 'tis possible, that we may also, if we be not the more carefull.

For First, We are all of the same depraved nature, that other Men are. That we are not all *Planets*, 'tis no thanks to our own particular constitutions, but to that good hand of providence, which hath fastened us among the *fixed Stars*; That any *Stars* have escaped the power of the Dragons Tayle, 'tis no thanks to any proper influence of their own, but it must be ascribed to him, who in his own right hand hath held them from falling, *Rev.* 1. 16. That we are not all Heretics and Sectaries, 'tis no thanks

to

to our Nature, for we are all cast in the same corrupt mold, that other Men are; and therefore other Mens wracks should be our warnings, and serve to make us the more wary to avoid danger.

2. As we are all of equal corruption by Nature, so we are all of answerable deserts by our practice. Some Men, through the just hand of God, have been given up to strong delusions, and if God should do the like by any of us, which of us could charge him with any injustice? 'Tis through Gods mercy, and not through our merit, if any of us have been hitherto preserved from the snare of the Fowler, and therefore we had need to walk the more humbly with God for the time to come, lest through our Security, or Pride, or Wantonness, we provoke him to leave

us to our selves, and to turn us over for a prey to those that watch for our halting.

Reason III. A third Reason for our care may be drawn from the cunning, and the subtilty of Seducers. They are very subtil and crafty in their wayes; and therefore we had need to be the more watchfull, lest we be deceived by them. He that hath any thing to do with crafty Companions, had need to have his eys in his head, and to look about him, lest he be cheated out of what he hath, and like fishes taken in an evil Net, he be betrayed into their Traps, and become a Captive to their Will and Pleasure. What are Seducers, but a company of Cheaters? And though they be not all alike cunning, yet there are none of them without some jugling tricks for

the advancing of their party, and therefore we may well take heed that no Man deceive us.

Seducers are very subtil Persons, especially they that are Heads of a Party, and File-Leaders of a Faction; And this may easily be Collected from severall passages of Holy Writ, wherein the actions of such persons are set down in such significant Metaphors, as may fitly proclaim their craftiness to all Men; in *Eph.* 4. 14. we find mention of *the sleight of Men, and cunning craftinesse, wherein they lye in wait to deceive.* The words in the Greek are, ἐν τῇ κυβείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐν παρουσίᾳ πρὸς τὴν μεθοδείαν τῆς πλάνης, in which there are three severall words made use of, every one of which reacheth full home to the matter in hand, which is, the subtilty of Seducers.

The

The first word is κυβεία, which comes from κυβος, a dye, and implies such a *sleight of hand*, as is in cunning Gamesters, who know how to shuffle in false dies, when they please, and how to cog the dies, and to throw what cast they please for their own advantage. The next word is πανουργία, which notes a *cunning craftiness*, like to that of a Serpent; Yea, like to that of the *Old Serpent*, when he first deceived our First Parents; For it is the same word which we have, 2 *Cor.* 11. 3. And is set there to signifie the subtilty, whereby the Serpent deceived *Eve*. There is yet a third word, which is as much as either of the former, if not more, and that is, πρὸς τὴν μεθοδείαν τῆς πλάνης, which as I conceive, may be rendred, *After the rate of those, who are Artificially trained up in the Trade of Deceiving.*

chiving. The same word is used, in *Eph.* 6.11. and there rendred, *Wiles*, by which we may see, that such Men are to be looked upon as cunning *Engineers* for Stratagems of War, as Men, that know how to lye in ambush, and to carry on designs so covertly, and out of sight, that there may be no suspition of their falshood, and if you please, I will lay before you some of the secrets of this their Art, that so you may both see, what reason we have to beware of them, and also learn the better how to shun and avoid them.

The Envious Man is said *to sow Tares*; Now there is a Method in *Sowing*, and that is, First, To make choice of a fit soyle; Secondly, to plow up the ground, and to prepare it for the seed; Thirdly, To throw in the seed, when

when the ground is so prepared; Fourthly, To harrow it in, when it is thus sown, and to fense and wate it, that it may be fruitfull; and the like method is observed by Deceivers, in the *Sowing* of their *Tares*.

First, They make choice of a fit soyle, and that's usually the *Weaker Sex*, who, being for the most part, of the weakest judgements, are therefore the most like to be wrought upon, and being of the strongest affections, are like to prove most Active Instruments, and (by reason of their Sex) the most prevailing Oratours, for the Propagating of what they are set upon among others also.

Secondly, The next work is to prepare the ground for the receiving of the Seed, and this they do by calling into question

ved Truths; For when once there is a doubting, and an anxiety bred in the mind, then the mind becomes the fitter to be wrought upon by them, and to receive any Stamp and Impression, which they desire to fasten upon it.

Thirdly, When the ground is thus prepared, then they begin to sow their *Tares*; when received Truths are once brought into suspition; then they begin to broach their falshood.

Fourthly, and lastly, They harrow and water what they have so sown, with *large promises, and specious pretences*, and other like Artificial helps, which they have alwaies ready, and whereby they gain both reception and success. And in this very method did the Serpent deal with our first Parents; For he begins with the

Woman,

Woman, then he questions a received Truth; *Hath God said ye shall not Eat?* Gen. 3. 1. And after this he utters his own falsehood, *Ye shall not surely dye*, Ver. 4. And that this might be the more easily entertained, he tells them a fair story of how hugely it would conduce to their Honour and Advancement, and withall spightfully insinuates, that Almighty God did, as it were envy them so great an happiness. This was the method of that grand Impostor of Old, and his Agents have ever since written after the same Copy, and trod in the same Steps, especially in their pretences of Love, and promises of Advantage.

And here comes in another piece of the cunning of Seducers, which is hinted at in a word that is used by St. *Peter*, 2 *Epistle*

2. 14. We read it *Beguiling*, but the word is, δελεάζοντες, which signifies *Beguiling with a Bait*, under which metaphor, Seducers are compared to cunning *Fishers*, and *Fowlers*, who know how to *bait their hooks*, and *snares* so, as may best serve, either to *allure* the desired prey, or to *conceal* the intended danger: Of like subtilty are Seducers, both in their *baits* and *blinds*, both to *allure* and *conceal*, the one of which they do by *fair promises*, the other by *specious pretences*, of each of which a word briefly.

First, They are cunning to allure by their baits, which baits are their *fair promises* of Ease or Honour, or other like advantage, with which they season their Errours, to make them pleasing to our palats, and as savoury meat to our corruptions. Thus when

Je-

Jeroboam set up his Idolatrous Calves, he baited his design with the Ease of the People, He knew that if they went up to *Jerusalem* to worship the True God in the Old Good Way which he had appointed, it would not be long before they would return again to their old Allegiance to their Lawfull Soveraign; and therefore he tells them, that they shall have an *easier*, and a *cheaper* Religion nearer home; *It is too much for you to go up to* Jerusalem, 1 *Kings* 12, 28. Thus *Antinomians*, and other Sectaries beguile Men into their Errours, with promises of an easier and smoother way to Heaven, than hath been discovered by other Men; and 'tis to be doubted, that the *Papists* have beguiled many by the same means, who in hopes to find among them an easier way

for

for the pardon of ſome ſins, than the Truth will afford them, have thereupon embraced their ſuperſtitions. Promiſes of *Eaſe* will do much, eſpecially when ſeconded with *Profit* or *Honour*. Who ſo dull as not to be in danger to be wrought upon by ſuch Allurements? The *Golden Cup* which is in the hand of the Woman, mentioned, *Revel.* 17. 4. hath, without controverſie, invited many to drink of her Abominations; but where-ever you ſee theſe *baits*, beware the *hook*; *You ſhall be as Gods*, is a ſtrong Temptation, and 'twas that by which our firſt Parents were brought into as bad, or worſe a Condition, than the Beaſts that periſh; And in like manner, the promiſe of a *Glorious Liberty* may be made an Engine, whereby to bring Men into an Intollerable *Bondage*, and

the hopes of a *Glorious Reformation* may betray them into an abominable *Confusion*.

Secondly, Thus you have seen their hooks baited; See also their Nets covered, and that's usually done with some specious pretences, of which they have no small variety.

Sometimes they pretend to more *Piety* than ordinary, and this they discover by their long Prayers, and frequent Fastings; But see how the best things may be abused, for under this veil, some Men have carried on most devilish designs, and hellish actions. Thus the *Pharisees* devoured Widdows Houses, *and for a colour made long Prayers*, Mat. 23. 14. Thus *Fasting* was a mantle for murder, in the case of *Naboth*, 1 *Kings* 21. 9. And thus *Religion* it self may be made a *Cloak* for

Cruelty

Cruelty and Wickedness, yea for Treason and Rebellion.

Sometimes they pretend a great *Zeal* for the glory of God, and yet underhand they drive on nothing more, than their own interest, 2 *Kings* 10. 16. Thus did *Jehu*, his pretence was *zeal* for the Lord, when he cut off the House of *Ahab*, and the Worshippers of *Baal*, and yet his grand design was the securing of himself in the enjoying of the Kingdome; And therefore, though he had an express command for what he did, and not a bare fancied Revelation; The Lord threatens to *avenge the blood of* Jezreel *upon the House of* Jehu, *Hosea* 1. 4. for *sinister ends* were the only *compass* by which his actions were *steered*, and whatever his pretences were, his heart was not upright before God.

Sometimes they pretend to a greater measure of *purity*, and to an higher pitch of *perfection*, than ordinary. So can the Prince of Darkness transform himself into an Angel of Light; and the Wolf disguise himself in Sheeps cloathing. Under this protence the *Donatists* of Old sought to justifie their separations from the Publique Assemblies of the People of God, and many also of latter times have set on foot severall Schismatical and Heretical Opinions, to the rending of the seamless Coat of Christ, and to the woful wounding and dividing of the Church of God.

Sometimes they pretend to more than ordinary *Humility*, abasing themselves even to the ground, to advance a party, *Creeping into Houses*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 6. Not only stealing in slily to prevent being

being discovered, but in a shew of humility, ready to crawl as it were upon their bellies to gain entertainment, but such crawlers and creepers are seldome without venome; And if these snakes be harboured till they grow warm, you may quickly perceive their proper temper.

And thus you have some of their *pretences* also, but you have not all their cunning yet; for besides all this that hath been said upon this Subject, they can *rack* the Scriptures to the length and breadth of their false Opinions, 2 *Pet.* 3. 16. and *torment* them to make them speak, more than ever they intended, for the maintaining of their lies, which Scriptures, if let down again, and left to themselves, and to their own proper sense and meaning, will prove too narrow, and too short

to serve their turn, and to cover their falshood. Besides this, they have also unwritten *Traditions*, and feigned *Miracles*, and cunning *devised Fables*; They can also pretend to *Dreams* and *Revelations*, and for a need can *forge Authours* for their own Advantage; Nor are they without their *clouted Shooes and patched Garments*, the better to beguile us with a shew of Antiquity, as the *Gibeonites* did the People of *Israel*, *Josh.* 9. 5. and all these they can set off, διὰ τῆς χρηστολογίας, καὶ εὐλογίας, with *good words*, *and faire speeches*, Rom. 16. 18. and ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας, *with flattering words* 1 Thes. 2. 5. yea πλάσοις λόγοις, 2 *Pet.* 2. 3. with artificial words, composed, as it were, on purpose and set as in a frame, for the better uttering of their false wares, and counterfeit commodities.

Some

Some of these St. *Paul* mentions, 2 *Thes.* 2. 2. Where he saith, that he would not have them *troubled, either by word, or by spirit, or by letter, as from him*; by *word*, there's Tradition; by *spirit*, there's Revelation; by *letter*, *as from me*, there's Forgery; and *Tradition*, *Revelation* and *Forgery* are usuall Arts, whereby Hereticks do deceive.

By some of these devises formerly mentioned, the *Papists* seek to support their Purgatory and Prayers for the dead, Invocation of Saints, Worshipping of Images, and other things of like nature; Nor have the *Anabaptists*, and *Quakers* been without their pretended *Revelations*, and *New Lights*, whereby to maintain their Old Errours, and vertigious Imaginations.

And Lastly, when all other means fail, some Seducers have been ready to rake Hell, by black Arts, and to call in to their aid the Prince of Darkness, that so by *lying wonders*, they may gaine the more credit to their damnable Doctrines.

Most of all these cunning devices that I have mentioned, were easie to be seen in the carriage of *Simon Magus*, and those Hereticks, that were his Followers, for they pretended to a greater depth of Knowledge, and Understanding in the hidden mysteries of those Scriptures, which were then extant, than other Men had and therefore they were called *Gnosticks*, then they suited their Doctrines, to Mans natural corruption, and to the basest of fleshly lusts, *Complying with the Heathen in their Abominable*

nable Idolatries, and alluring with much wantonnesse, those that had escaped from them, that live in errour, promising also *Ease* to the Flesh, and freedom from Worldly troubles, by Teaching it lawfull to deny Christ in times of Persecution; and at last, like *Jannes* and *Jambres*, who withstood *Moses*, they counterfeited the Miracles of the greatest Apostles, the more to disparage the Truth of the Gospel, and to bring their notorious Lies into Credit, and Reputation. Thus did they. And whether the *worst* of these Arts have not sometimes been made use of by some of the *Iesuites*, and their emissaries (amongst whom I think it will be no injury to reckon some of the Quakers also) is not a little to be doubted. Sure I am, that they whom we read *Seducers*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 13.

are in the *Greek* called γοητες, *i. e. Sorcerers*, by which word we understand Men that have some skill in Witchcraft, or at least, know how to *blind the eyes*, and to *delude the fancies* of their beholders; that they shall think (like Men in a dream) that their hands are full of Gold, when 'tis nothing but leaves; And that they have before them plentifull Tables, when there is nothing to be fed on, but appearance and delusion; And so do Seducers deceive the eyes of their Followers with false lights, which serve only to lead Men out of the way, and to betray them into the ditch. Seeing then, that Seducers are such subtile Serpents, such cunning Gamesters, such crafty Companions, such skilfull Fowlers, such Masters of Art, in the Mystery of Couzenage, we

had

had need to take a great deal of heed that no Man deceive us.

I have been somewhat large upon this point; but I hope, not tedious, because 'tis no more than the nature of the Subject doth require; but I will be the briefer in the Reasons following.

Reason IV. A fourth Reason may be taken from the dangerousness of Seducers; For as they are cunning, so they are pernicious persons; for what are they but Theeves and Robbers? And *the Thief comes not, but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy*, John 10. 10. St. *Paul* saith, *See that no man spoil you*, Col. 2. 8. the word is συλαγωγῶν, *least any Man carry you away, as a Prey, as a Prisoner, as a Captive, to make Prize of their Estates, and and slaves of their Persons*, 2 Tim. 3. 6. where the word is, αἰχμα-

λωτεύων, from δόχμη, which signifies a *Spear*; and ἁλωτὸς, *Taken*, so *Pasor*, *q. d.* led *Captive*, like Prisoners taken by Conquest in the Battel, or lest you be carried away, as the Sheep by the Thief, to be destroyed and devoured. Seducers are no better than *Theeves*, *Sheep-stealers*, yea *Men-stealers*, they steal the Sheep from the Shepherd, yea one Man from another; yea a Man from himself, and their coming is to rob us of the Truth, and of our Peace (False Doctrine is a great *troubler* of Mens minds, *Gal.* 1. 7. but Truth brings *rest*, Jer. 6. 16.) and of our comfort, and at last of our very Souls, and Heaven, and Happiness also; and when these be gone, what will be left us but beggary and Everlasting misery? And therefore being such dangerous persons, we have the more

more reason to take heed, that no Man deceive us.

Reason V. The last Reason may be taken from the difficulty of getting off again, if once we be intangled, if once we be got into the snare, it will not be an easie thing to recover our liberty, and this difficulty ariseth partly from the *cunning* of *Seducers*, and partly from the *nature of Errour*.

Seducers are as cunning to keep possession, as to gain admission, and to this end they frighten their Followers with the wofull dangers of *Apostacy from the Truth* (for so they call the revolting from their Errours) and by this device they so boare their eares, that they are in danger to be their servants for ever.

Besides this, *Errour is of a spreading Nature*, the corrupt doctrine of the *Pharisees* is called *leaven*,

Mat.

Mat. 16. 6. Because it is of a sour and enlarging nature. Hereupon St. *Paul* saith, *Shun prophane and vain babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a Canker*, 2 Tim. 2. 16, 17. The like Caution we have, *Heb.* 12. 15. *Look to it, that no root of bitterness spring up, and thereby many be defiled; evill Men and Seducers may worse and worse*, 2 Tim. 3. 13. So hard a matter it is, if once we be caught, to recover again out of the snare of the Devil.

So that if we put all this together, we may plainly perceive, that we have a great deal of reason, to be watchfull over our selves, and *to take heed that no Man deceive us.*

What remains now, but that I press you earnestly to this your duty: if ever there were age wherein this Subject were in season, this is it.

Eras-

Erasmus in writing the Life of St. *Jerome*, hath a notable passage concerning those times, wherein that Father lived; His words are these, *Nullum fuit unquam saeculum seditiosius, neque confusius & sic omnia contaminarant haereticorum errores, ac dissidia, ut magna cujusdam artis fuerit orthodoxum esse, i. e.* There was never any age fuller of confusion and sedition, and the errours and dissentions of Hereticks had so polluted all things, that it was a kind of Art for a Man to be Orthodox; which passage looks as if it were Calculated for our Meridian; 'Tis the very Picture of the Times wherein we have lately lived, wherein there have been spread abroad such variety of errours, that it could be no less than an Art to be Orthodox.

Al-

Almighty God fed us once with the ſtaves of a good Shepherd, *Beauty and Bands*, in beauty there was unity, in bands order; but our beauty hath been defaced, and our bands broken; our unity divided, and our order diſſolved; many Shepherds have been ſmitten, and the Flocks ſcattered; the Gaps were left open, and the Foxes let looſe, and the Sheep had got *Libertatem Erroris*, and were at liberty to ſtray and periſh, as it were *Cum Priviligio*. It cannot therefore but be a word in ſeaſon to call upon Men to look about them.

Bleſſed be the God of Truth, for the hopes which he hath given us, of ſeeing better times, but the Day is ſo newly broke, and there is ſo much of the old leaven gone abroad, and our own Station is ſo ſlippery, and errour is

ſo

ſo infectious, that I hope it will prove an acceptable ſervice, to warn every one of you, as Chriſt warned his own Diſciples, *To take heed that no Man deceive you.*

And for your better furtherance in this ſo needfull a work, I cannot, in the general, commend unto your thoughts, any better direction than this; Namely, *To be in the fear of the Lord all the day long*; Even Natural fear is the great Guardian of the Body; how warily doth he walk, that is afraid of falling? How carefull is that Man about his money that fears robbing? How diligent is he, that is afraid of danger? How circumſpect is he, that is afraid of ſickneſs? So is ſpiritual fear the great Guardian of the Soul; *For by the fear of the Lord Men depart from Evil*; Prov. 16. 6. And the ſame fear will preſerve us alſo

from

from departing from God, *Jer.* 32. 40. If therefore you would not be led away, τῶν ἀθέσμων πλάνῃ, 2 *Pet.* 3. 17. with the errour of *lawless Men*; be not high minded but fear; *Happy is the Man that feareth alway, but he that hardeneth his heart, shall fall into mischief*, Pro. 28. 14.

For particular helps against the danger of being seduced, let me commend unto you these few following.

Helps against Seduction.

First, *Labour to know the Truth.* A blinde Man may easily be led out of the way. And to this end, *Let the Word of Christ dwell in you Richly*, that you may be able to discern between things that differ; for his *Word is Truth*, Joh. 17. 17. This will be *a Lamp to*

our feet, and a light to our paths; but ignorance of the Scriptures, is the way to errour, *Mat.* 22. 29. This was the Rule of Old, *to the Law, and to the Testimonies, Isa.* 8. 20. And it is in force still, and it is well for us, that we have a *written Word* for a Rule to walk by; for otherwise, what certainty could we have of any of those things that do belong to our peace? 'Tis by the Scriptures that we come to know the voice of Christ from the voice of a stranger, and to be preserved from the path of the destroyer. This is the principal Antidote, which St. *Paul* prescribes against the like danger, as may appear by comparing, *Acts* 20. *v.* 29, 30. with *v.* 32. for having warned them of grievous Wolves, which should enter among them after his departure, for a remedy against them,

them, he commends them to God, *and to the Word of his Grace, &c.* And the like may be observed from 2 *Tim.* 3. if we compare the four last verses with the rest of the Chapter.

Secondly, *Labour to be rooted, and settled, and stablished in the Truth.* Be not *Children in Understanding*, nor yet in *Inconstancy*; *mutatur in horas*, is the Character of a Child in the phrase of the Poet; Children are never long in one mind, but be not you such Children; a tottering wall may easily be blown down; a Childish inconstancy is in danger to be tossed to and fro, like a wave of the Sea: a Weather-Cock disposition is easily carried about, with every wind of Doctrine, *Eph.* 4. 14. *Unstable Souls may quickly be insnared*; and therefore, *Hold fast the profession of the Faith*

with-

without wavering, 2 *Pet.* 2. 14. Wavering is the way to wander from the Truth.

Thirdly, *Be contented with the Truth, without itching after novelties*, least you be drawn away from sound Doctrine; He that is weary of being led by God, is in danger to be led away with Errour. Remember them, that were weary of *Manna*, and lusted for flesh, *Numb.* 11. 33. It had been better for them to have been contented with Gods allowance, than to have longed for such varieties, they had sweet meats indeed, but they had soure sauce with it; *For while the meate was in their mouths, the heavy wrath of God fell upon them*; and they that did feed to the fullest, did never thrive with it; *For God sent leannesse into their Soul*, Psal. 106. 15.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, *Be lovers of the Truth*, Men are not easily won to let go what they love, but if once our love to the Truth grow cold, we may easily be wrought upon to exchange it for Fables: Yea, it is just with God, that such Men as do not *embrace the love of the truth, that they may be saved, should be given up to believe lies*, 2 Thess 2. 10, 11.

Fifthly, *Be ye doers of the truth*, and beware of living in any known way of wickedness with liking and allowance.

There are some Men that are more in danger to be seduced, than other Men are; Some are ἀμαθεῖς, *Unlearned Souls*, 2 Pet 3 16. These may easily be wrought upon to call good, evil, and evil, good; 'Tis an easie matter for ignorant Men to be deceived: Some are ἀστήρικτοι Men that are

not well under-set, not well propt up; *not rooted and stablished in the Faith*, which they have been taught, and such *unstable souls* may easily be beguiled; some are ἄκακοι, plain-hearted, well-meaning Men, People that have no harm in them; and therefore are not apt to suspect any in others, and therefore are the more in danger to be over-reached, *Rom.* 16. 18. but none in more danger to be seduced than wicked Men, *Wicked Men and Seducers* are coupled by St. *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 3 13. and well they may, for disorder in the affections, is the way to corrupt the understanding: Errour in practice will in time draw on errour in judgement, and when once *a good conscience is put away*, *Faith will quickly suffer Ship-wrack*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 19. He that lives in any known sin, which he is

is resolved not to part withall, that Man is swept and garnished for the entertaining of any Erroneous Doctrine, which shall tend to strengthen his hands, and to comfort his heart in his way of wickedness. *Facile credimus, quod volumus.* We are very apt to believe what we would have to be true, and are loath to doubt of such things, as are agreeable to our desires.

Sixthly, *Beware of calling into question apparent Truths*, and of disputing express commands, for after this manner the *Serpent* beguiled *Eve*; And by this means the Man of God, that was sent to *Bethel*, was betrayed to believe a lye, 1 *King*. 13. No Commission *Per. Ol.* should ever sway us against express Orders *under Hand and Seal*: Nor should the *pretended Voice* of an *Angel* prevail with

with us against the *Express Voice* of *God*, least it prove bitterness in the latter end; for by the one, we may be deceived, by the other we cannot.

Seventhly, *Beware of their Society, who with judicious, and understanding Men, have the repute of Seducers.* *Peter* in the High-Priests Hall, may quickly be brought to deny his Master: They that desire the health of their bodies, are carefull to shun all places of infection: And so should we be too, if our desire be the health of our souls. 'Tis dangerous for the Unlearned to be hearers of such Men, or to read their books, or to hold discourse with them, though it be with an intent not to be led by them. *Dinah* had no intent to be defiled, when her curiosity sent her forth to see the Daughters of the Land; But 'tis

not good to be gadding, or to walk in tempting wayes. God hath made no promise to *preserve us from evil*, when we *lead our selves into Temptation*.

Eightly, *Trust no Mans Doctrine upon his own bare word*, nor *upon his bond neither, unless he bring the word of God for his security*. Believe not the *Matter*, for the *Mans* sake, but the *Man* for the *Matters* sake: If we pin our Faith upon another Mans sleeve, we know not whither it may be carried; 'Tis not good to be too credulous, lest sometimes we be couzened: *Try all things, and hold fast what is good*; Is the precept of St. *Paul*, 1 *Thess.* 5. 21.

How curious are Men in receiving of Money? A Man will tell Money after his own Father, and if any piece be suspicious, we turn it, and wind it, and ring it,

it, and rub it, and ſmell to it, and ſhew it to the by-ſtanders, and it may be carry it to the Gold-ſmith, to try and touch it, nor care we whoſe *Image* and *Super-ſcription* it bears, if once we diſcover the Coyn to be counterfeit. And have we not much more reaſon to be curious about thoſe things that do belong to the good of our Souls? Follow therefore in this caſe, the advice of St. *John* 1 Epiſt. 4. 1. *Many falſe Prophets are gone forth*, ſaith he, (and ſo may we) *believe not therefore every one*, that pretends to the Spirit, *but try what Spirit they are of.* And for our better direction in their diſcovery; Theſe following Rules may be very uſefull.

Rules for the Tryal of false Prophets. Rule 1.

FIrst, *They that come not in by the door, are Theeves and Robbers*, *John* 10. 1. It is spoken there of false Christs, but it holds true also, of false Prophets, and by this *door* I understand a *lawfull calling*, nor may any Man take upon him to be a Messenger of God, unless he be fairly called to it; And if any Man pretend to a *Mission*, and can produce no *Commission* for what he doth, he is but a Deceiver.

I do not deny, but that a Man may be *truely* a Prophet and yet he may be a *false* Prophet, he may be *truely* a Prophet, in regard of the lawfulness of his calling, and yet he may be a *false* Prophet in regard of the ill discharging of his

his duty; and therefore I do not say, that a lawfull calling is enough to argue the Truth of a Mans Doctrine; But this I say, that the want of a lawfull calling is enough to prove the falshood of the person. *Who sent thee?* or *who made thee a Minister?* Is a needfull question; For if any Man come in his own Name, it is to be doubted, that he comes upon his own Errand. The Lord complains of some *that spake lyes in his Name, and he never sent them, Ier.* 14. 14. If they speak lies, we may be sure that he never sent them, or at least not on that Errand; and if he sent them not, what can we expect, but lies from them?

If God send any upon his Errands, it is either by the ordinary way of imposition of those reverend hands, in which Christ hath

intrusted that power for the good of his Church; or else 'tis by the way *extraordinary*: Now whomsoever he sends *this way*, he doth not onely vouchsafe unto them some special Revelation, for the perswading of themselves, but also he indues them with power sufficient for the performing of such works as are above the reach of Men, or Devils, and for the doing of such things, as may carry Authority with them, to convince others also, that they are sent of God. These are Gods wayes, and whoever they be that pretend to be sent of God, and yet cannot make it out by one of these wayes, we may safely conclude that God never sent them, *unless it be to prove the sincerity of our Love*, as it is said of the false Prophet, *Deut.* 13. 3. or else for a punishment to a barren,

ren, and wanton Nation; and if like *Iezabel*, Rev. 2. 20. they *call themselves* Prophets upon their own account, we may call them *Seducers*.

Secondly, *They that can indure no superiority in the Church, are suspicious persons.* The ground of this, I have from St. *Jude*, for he complains of some dangerous Men, that were in his dayes, and amongst other their ill qualities, which he there reckons up; he saith, That they did *despise Dominions, and speak evil of Dignities*, vers. 8. And he denounceth a woe against them for being cruel, like *Cain*, and covetous, like *Balaam*, and seditious, like *Corah*, vers. 11. It should seem by St. *Jude*, that they were factious disturbers of that comly Order, which God had settled in his Church; for though by *Dominions*

nions, verſ. 8. we may underſtand the *Civil Power*, yet reaſon wills, that by *Dignities*, we underſtand the *Eccleſiaſtical Order*; how elſe could they be ſaid to periſh in the *gain-ſaying of Corah?* For if there had not been ſome Dignities and Eminencies in the *Church of the Chriſtians*, even in thoſe moſt Primitive Times, as well as there were of old in the *Church of* the *Iews*, it can never ſink into my head, how it is poſſible for any Man to periſh in the *gain-ſaying of Corah*, now in the times of the Goſpel; for this was the heart-root of *Corahs* ſin, he ſought to *equall the Levite with the Prieſt*, and ſo became fouly guilty of that fault, of *taking too much upon him*, of which he falſely accuſed others; as doth moſt plainly appear by *Numb.* 16. 7, 9, 10. *This was the cauſe of their gathering together*

ther against the Lord, verſ. 11. *Corah* being but a *Levite*, would needs be a *Prieſt* (as if in theſe our dayes) he that were but a *Presbyter*, ſhould take upon him to be a *Biſhop*; this was the maine of the matter. Indeed, he did oppoſe *Moſes*, as well as *Aaron*, but *Moſes* came in only *by the by*, for the grand deſign lay wholly againſt *Aaron*. I do not think but that *Corah* could have been contented to have let *Moſes* alone, if *Moſes* would have been contented to have left *Aaron* alone; But if *Moſes* be like to take *Aarons* part, *Moſes* muſt look to ſhare in *Aarons* portion; for rather than *Corah* will not oppoſe the *Prieſt*, he will oppoſe the *Prince* too; and rather than not prevail againſt *Aaron*, he will ſtrike at *Moſes* alſo; So that *Moſes* was brought in, more for *Aarons* ſake than his own. C 5 And

And as for *Dathan* and *Abiram*, they were mearly drawn in. And 'tis most probable, that *Corah* stirred them up against *Moses*, chiefly for this end, that he might the better ingage them for himself against *Aaron*: For the main Plot was against him, and the whole design was (in all likelihood) contrived by *Corah*, 'twas he that was the head of the party, all they did but march under his colours; nor is it called *the matter of Dathan*, but the *matter of Corah*, Numb. 16.19. See also *Num*.16. 5, 11. and *Numb*. 26. 9. and 27. 3.

Where, by the way, observe the joynt Interest between *Moses* and *Aaron*. The design against *Aaron* reacheth to *Moses* too, and the opposing of *Moses* takes in *Aaron* also. Thus, *no Aaron*, *no Moses*; and if *Moses* be like to fall,

fall, *Aaron* is not like to ſtand. The *King* and the *Prieſt* go down together, *Lam.* 2. 6.

But now ſee the iſſue of this *matter of Corah.* While *Corah* ſought to remove the bounds between the *Prieſt* and the *Levite*, there were others, that were as buſie with the ſame tools to pull down the pale, between the *Levite* and the *People*, and by laying all in common to bring all to confuſion. If the *Levite* will own no *Prieſt*, the *People* will own no *Levite*; or thus, If the *Levites* will all be *Prieſts*, the *People* will be ready to think, that they may all as well be *Levites*, and that *all the Congregation are Holy*, as well as they, *even every Man of them.* Inſomuch, that now God himſelf was fain to interpoſe in the behalf of that Tribe, which he had ſet apart for himſelf, and by miracle

racle to maintain his own election. The miracle was wrought in the *Rod of Aaron*, with lower, second, and third stories; for though it had of it self neither root, nor sap, yet by the mighty power of God, that Rod only, among all the rest of the Rods, *budded buds, bloomed blossomes, and brought forth ripe Almonds*, Num. 17. 8. By which miracle, as God did testifie his chusing, and owning of that Tribe, above all the other Tribes, for his own more immediate service: So by the manner thereof, he gave them at once, both *an Emblem of Order*, and also a *Pledge for Succession*; of Order, for blossomes are in a degree above buds, and Almonds above blossomes; and of Succession too; for buds were ready to grow up into blossomes, and blossomes to knit and ripen into

into Almonds, when the old Almons were dropt off. And therefore well worthy was this Rod, to be laid up in ſtore, and to be kept for a token, being an *Emblem of Order*, and a *Pledge for Succeſſion*, as well as a *Teſtimony of the choice of God.* And as the *Cenſors of* Corah *were made broad plates for a covering for the Altar, for a memorial unto the Children of* Iſrael, *that no ſtranger, which was not of the Seed of* Aaron, *come near to offer Incenſe before the Lord, that he be not as* Corah, *and as his Company*, Numb. 16. 40. So might that Rod alſo ſerve for a *memorial*, that no ſtranger, which was not of the Tribe of *Levi*, preſume to medle with the things of the Tabernac'e, leaſt he be like that mutinous Congregation. By all which, if it be duly

For a token againſt the Rebels, Numbe. 17. 10.

duly weighed, you may eaſily judge, if I have not reaſon to ſay, *That they who can indure no Superiority in the Church, are ſuſpicious perſons.*

Thirdly, *Revilers and Oppoſers of thoſe Miniſters, and that Miniſtry of the Goſpel, which hath been ſettled in the Church by the Holy Ghoſt in all ages downward, even from the Apoſtles dayes, are to be looked upon as Impoſtors and Seducers.*

It is no marvel, if Deceivers cry out againſt thoſe that are the *duly Ordained Miniſters* of the Goſpel, for theſe are the rubs that lye in their way, and that ſtrike off their Chariot wheels, and cauſe them to drive on their deſigns but heavily: And till they can prevail with their ſimple Auditors to lay theſe aſide, they will not be able to do any feats amongſt them. Are not the Mi-

Ministers compared to *Shepherds*, and to *Salt*? And why so, unless it be to shew what use they are of, even in this behalf, (*Scil.*) to secure us from Wolves, and to preserve us from Putrefaction? And experience makes it good; for when once the Sheep grow weary of the Shepherd, as *useless*, or *burdensome*, they quickly become a prey to Wolves, and Foxes; and if once we can be perswaded to throw this *Salt* into a corner, those flyes will quickly be buzzing about our eares, to fill our brains with worms, and our minds with rottenness. Observe that passage of the Apostle, *Ephe.* 4. 11, 12, 13, 14. That you may the better take heed how you sleight the Ministers of the Gospel, all the daies of your life. *God gave some Apostles, &c.* and *some Pastors, and Teachers.* Mark, *not*

all

all Teachers, for who then ſhould be Hearers? But *ſome Paſtors and Teachers*. And why hath he given the Church Paſtors and Teachers, but amongſt other ends, for this alſo, that we ſhould not *be toſſed to and fro, and carried about, &c?* verſ. 14. If then God gave Miniſters to prevent Seducers, we may well account them no better than Seducers, that ſhall revile or oppoſe them.

Fourthly, Beware of thoſe, *Who decline the Word of God revealed in the Scriptures, and ſet up any other Rule to walk by, in the worſhip of God, and way of Salvation.* 'Tis his word that is the Truth, and therefore to decline this, and inſtead thereof to ſet up *Traditions, new Lights, or pretended Revelations*, is the mark of a deceiver. There be many in theſe latter dayes, that have boaſted much of the Spirit,

Spirit, and pretended to Revelations no less than Angelical; but let them boast and pretend what they will, *Si à verbo discrepant, non sunt Evangelicæ Revelationes, sed Diabolicæ illusiones*, if they agree not with the written Word of God, they are no Evangelical Revelations, but they are diabolical delusions. 'Tis the way of Christs Apostles, that we must walk in, we must *hear them, i. e.* Believe, Regard, Obey, and follow them, and they that do not thus hear them, are not of God, *and by this we may know the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Errour*, 1 Joh. 4. 6.

Fifthly, *They that are for Divisions and Offences contrary to the Doctrine, which we have learned from the blessed Apostles, are to be marked and avoided*; For they serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies, *Rom.* 16. 17. If

If it be but *strange Doctrine*, *Heb.* 13. 9. (with which heretofore we have had no acquaintance) which is brought unto us, let it ſtand at the door, and examine it thorowly, before it be let in, and unleſs it have a good certificate, give it no entertainment, but if it croſs *the unity of the Spirit, and the bond of Peace*, away with it; for unneceſſary ſtrife, and needleſs diviſions, have no agreement with the Spirit of God. To this purpoſe give me leave to acquaint you with a paſſage of a Modern Divine, much to be taken notice of, his words are theſe: "In a Church, "where the Doctrine of Salva-"tion by Chriſt only is ſoundly "and truly taught and received; "if any, the moſt ſanctified man "in ſhew, ſhall teach any thing, "which may tend to make a di-"viſion,

"vision, or faction, and to di-
"sturb the Peace of the
"Church; suspect, and
"be jealous thereof: for
"either it is false, or
"if true, yet better be
"buried as low as the Centre of
"of the Earth, than to be broa-
"ched to break the Peace and
"Unity of the Church. Thus he.

See Master Par in his Lectures on Rom. 16. 17.

Sixthly, *Beware of those that promise Liberty beyond the bounds of the Gospel.* The Gospel indeed is a perfect Doctrine of perfect Liberty, shewing us the ready way how to be freed from the terrour and rigour of the Law, from the service of sin, and slavery of Satan, and from the curse of God, and the wrath to come. But if any Man shall stretch this liberty to a freedom from Parents, and Masters, and Magistrates, and Minsters, to a freedome from the Ordi-

Ordinances of God, to a freedom from the Moral Law, as the Rule of our Obedience, to a freedom from penitential sorrows, and from praying unto God for the pardon of our sins; this is beyond the liberty of the Gospel. This, is *not liberty, but loosenes*, this is *liberty* turned into a *cloak of maliciousnes*, and they that thus promise *liberty*, are themselves the *Servants of Corruption*; See 1 *Tim.* 6. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Seventhly, *By their Fruits you may know them*, Mat. 7. 16. not by their *leaves*, but by their *fruit*, for the leaves may be fair, when the fruit is faulty; Not by their *Cloathing*, but by their *Carriage*; for that may be *sheepish*, when this is *ravenous* and devouring: Not by their *Street-doors*, but by their *secret chambers*; for the one may be swept and clean, when the other

ther are foul and nasty. There is filthiness of the *Spirit*, as well as of the *Flesh*, and though they put away Fornication and Drunkenness, yet if they retain Pride, and Hatred, and Malice, and Wrath, and Seditions, and Heresies, are they not Carnal? Men may pretend to much Light and Perfection, and Acquaintance with God, but if they say, *They have no Sin*, they are a company of lyers, 1 *John* 1. 8. and 10. And they that *walk in hatred*, let them pretend what they will, they *walk in darkness*, 1 Joh. 2. 9. and 11. And therefore look narrowly into their Conversations. A Conversation truly pure, and truly peaceable, patient and meek, full of self-denial, and mercy, and charity, is a conversation suitable to the Gospel, but they that walk contrary to these, are

are *disorderly walkers*. *Walkers* indeed, some of them are, for they go to and fro, and compass Sea and Land to make Proselytes, who if they come not within compass of the Statute against *Vagrants* and *Wanderers* (whom a whip and a pass should convey to the place from whence they came) yet they should be carefully avoided by all those that wish well to their own peace, and the good of their brethren.

Or lastly, If this be not the true meaning of that place, *Mat.* 7. 16. then by *their fruits*, we must understand *the fruit which grows upon their Doctrine*; observe what fruit their Doctrine brings forth, for by that you shall know them. The scope of their Doctrine will help to discover what they are. If it tend to the *denying of all Ungodlinesse, and Worldly Lusts*, *and*

and to living Godly, Righteously, and Soberly in this present World, 'tis well; But if it tend to the *strengthening of the hands of evil doers*, this is according to the false Prophets of old, *Jer.* 23. 14. If it tend to Peace, and Love, and Mercy, and Meekness, 'tis well; But if it tend to Hatred, Variance, Envy and Malice, it cometh of Evil; If it tend to *build Men up in their most holy Faith*; If it tend to a *growth in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Iesus Christ*; If it tend to the growing up in all things *into him, which is the head, i. e.* into a greater communion with, and conformity to the Lord Jesus, 'tis well; but if it tend not to these things, 'tis but *hay and stubble* at the most, or else, 'tis a *wind of Doctrine*, empty and light stuff at the best, having more of noise and

and ſound, than of ſoundneſs and ſolidity. But if this *wind* prove bluſtering and tempeſtuous, raiſing up ſtorms of Sedition and Rebellion, and kindling the coals of needleſs Contentions all the day long, though it carry with it never ſo great a ſhew of zeal and holineſs, yet can it not proceed from the Spirit of that God, who is *not the Authour of Confuſion, but of Peace*, 1 *Cor*. 14. 33. But 'tis a *blaſt* rather, raiſed by him, who is the Prince of the power of the Air, whoſe ſubtilty is ſuch, that he knows how to make Addition by Subſtraction, and how to Multiply by Diviſion; and whoſe Malice is ſuch, that he will doe whatſoever he can for the defacing of a beautifull Church, and the ruining of a flouriſhing Nation. And his Agents may they be counted, that are ſuch Authours

thours of Confusion, *and by such fruits you may know them.*

Thus have I shewed you what reason you have to beware of Seducers, I have also shewed you how to be preserved from them, and by what marks they may be known from other Men. I will now conclude all with the words of St. *Peter*, 2 Pet. 3. 17, 18. *Seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the Errour of the Wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Iesus Christ; To whom be Glory, both Now and for Ever,*

Amen.

UMI

THE
Blind Mans
MEDITATIONS
On PSAL. 139. 12.

THe dark and light, O God, are like (to Thee:
So are the day and night alike to me,
Yet how unlike, O Lord, am I to Thee!

The dark and light, are both alike to thee,
Because to thee the very dark is light;
The day and night, are both alike to me,
Because to me the very day is night.
The dark's no dark to thee,
The day's no day to me,
O how unlike to thee!

Thou all things seest, unseen of any,
I nothing see, though seen by many,
There's nothing hid from thee,
There's nothing seen by me,
O how unlike to thee!

Thou 'rt purity it ſelf, I all defil'd,
Alwiſe, Almighty thou, I twice a Childe,
I a blind worm, thou the moſt glorious God,
Thou the moſt holy, I a ſinful clod, (thee
Thou dwel'ſt in light, & that light ſhadows
Darkneß doth compaß, yet not cover me,
O how unlike to thee!

Happy were I, if I were like to thee
In things wherein there may a likeneß be;
And yet for this, thy Precept is expreß,
'Tis thy command, I ſhould reſſemble thee,
Thus what's my duty, is my happineß,
So gracious is thy goodneß toward me,
Thy Precept therefore ſhould my prayer be,
Lord make me like to thee.

Father of light, from darkneß ſet me free,
O ſhine upon me with thy heavenly grace,
Renew that Image, which was loſt in me,
Make me ſo pure, that I may ſee thy face,
Then ſhall I happy be,
Becauſe then like to thee.

THE

THE BLIND MANS *Meditation*

On Eccles. 11. 7.

TRuly the light is sweet, saith Solomon,
And 'tis a pleasant thing to see the Sun.
And well he might
Thus praise the light,
Which is so pure, so fair, so bright,
And gives such lustre to all lovely features,
And was, in time, and worth the first of Creatures.

In the Creation God with Light began,
Not for himself, but for the use of Man;
For by the same
We view this frame,
And learn to praise Gods Glorious Name
For all his works, which, if they be not seen,
Would seem to us, as if they had not been.

Whatever wonders Art, and Cost, bring forth,
Without the Light, they would be nothing worth.
Both Books and Blanks,
Pictures and Planks,
The dark bestows in equall ranks,
And, if the Light her rayes did not disperse,
There were no beauty in the universe.

What's done, and how, 'tis light discovery brings,
Light is the great distinguisher of things.
All Colours, Faces,
Dressings, Laces,
Look alike in all dark places.
And without light, the World would, in conclusion,
Seem but a very Chaos *of* Con*fusion.*

And with the light, the sight may well compare
In use, and loss, they do so joyntly share.
No light, no sight,
No sight, no light,
Where either fails, 'tis all but night.
Here (one alone is none) holds true of either,
For both are useless, if not both together.

If light and sight, be then so full of gladness,
Needs must the loss of both abound with sadness.
Then woe is me
That cannot see,
My light and sight Ecclipsed be,
And I may say, my worldly joyes are past,
For now my Sun *is set, I have seen my last.*

Yet why should I so much dejected be?
Why should the loss of sight so trouble me?
For this I finde,
There's none so blind,
As he that hath a darkned mind.
If God reveal to me his Loving Kindness,
I'le not account my loss of eye-sight, Blindness.

Though

Though I be blind, yet may I in some measure
See the Laws wonders, and the Gospels Treasure.
How to believe,
And how to live,
Gods word doth full directions give,
With which if once my mind enlightned be,
I'le never more complain, I cannot see.

There are the things that do concern our peace,
Wherewith themselves the blessed Angels please.
Thence springs that light,
That brings delight,
And can redeem my Soul from night,
And is to endless light preparatory;
The light of Grace, leads to the light of Glory.

And that's the Inheritance of the Saints in light,
Of which the Blind, may yet obtain the sight.
Above the skyes,
Jobs hopes did rise,
Though death should quite consume his eyes.
With whose resolves, Lord let me rest in peace,
In hopes to see with better eyes than these.

Sith then there be so many sweeter lights,
Compar'd to which these present dayes are nights,
Lord shew thou me
The way to thee,
Fill me with hopes, thy face to see,
And I'le not say, though blind, my joyes are gone
But rather thus, my joyes are yet to come.

THE BLIND MANS LOSSE.

LOsers, they say may speak, then blame not me,
If I bewail mine own unhappiness;
For I'm a loser in an high degree,
Higher, indeed, than I can well express,
And yet I know not how to hold my peace;
Speaking may give a grieved mind some ease.

My windows lately had a stately prospect
Of hills and vales, of towns, and woods, & fields,
Of forts, and ships, and every pleasing object,
Which either skyes, or earth, or ocean yields,
But now 'tis lost, and that which adds to grieve me,
'Tis not the Art of Man that can relieve me.

I had a skilfull guide, that did direct me,
I had a watchfull guard, that did attend me,
I had a faithful scout, that did respect me,
And upon all occasions much befriend me,
All which are lost, and I that loss bemoan,
My sight, my guide, my guard, my scout, is gone,

O what an alteration blindness brings!
Through want of sight, things be not what they be
Windows and eyes to me be no such things,
The day's no day, the Sun's no sun to me,

Blindness

Blindneſs hath turn'd my windows into walls,
My noon to-night, mine eyes to uſeleſs balls.

I have loſt the uſe of all my books and papers,
Which were ſo helpfull to me heretofore;
I have loſt the light, & now through cloudy vapours
'Tis grown ſo dark, that I can work no more.
All theſe I loſt, when once I loſt my ſight,
And now 'tis time, to bid the World good night.

But ſtay (my Soul) though great thy loſſes are,
Thy Bleſſed Saviour doth not yet forſake thee,
Make him thine own, and then thou needſt not care,
His joyfull preſence will a gainer make thee.
That's true indeed, to him I'le therefore flye,
Whoſe fulneſs can my loſſes all ſupply.

Be thou my ſtrength (O God) and I ſtand ſurely;
Be thou my light, and I ſhall find my way;
Be thou my ſhield, and I ſhall walk ſecurely;
Be thou my guide, and I ſhall never ſtray;
Be thou my ſtrength, my light, my ſhield, my guide,
And I ſhall neither ſtray, nor fall, nor ſlide.

Be thou my fortreſs, foes ſhall foil me never;
Be thou my portion, I ſhall ne'r be poor;
Be thou my life, and I ſhall live for ever;
Be thou my God, and I deſire no more;
Shine thou on me, and I ſhall need no Sun,
Nor fear, whilſt thou art mine, to be undone.

THE

THE BLIND MANS *Advantage.*

THe dark doth not a Dungeon make,
Nor night the want of brightneſs;
A knowing and contented mind
Can turn that dark to lightneſs;
May I from ignorance be free,
And ſee Gods loving-kindneſs,
With Angels bright,
That live in light,
I'le not complain of blindneſs.

The fooliſh are compar'd with beaſts,
Though differing in their feature,
Who knowledge wants, though he have his ſight,
Is but a brutiſh creature,
Where eyes are loſt, thee inward light
With knowledge can requite them.
Minds truly wiſe
Have Angels eyes,
'Tis happy to be like them.

'Tis

'Tis ſad, I know, to loſe the ſight,
And much to be lamented,
Yet therein finde I gain enough
To make the blind contented;
For when mine eyes could look abroad,
They ſometimes bred me danger,
And I was then,
Like many men,
At home too much a ſtranger.

But now I'me free from all thoſe ſnares,
Way-laid for eyes that wander,
Whoſe looks have often p·ov'd to luſt
No better than a pandar;
From all whoſe moſt alluring baits
My blindneſs doth exempt me,
What Eve *beguil'd,*
Or David *foil'd,*
Hath now no power to tempt me.

And now mine eyes are inward bent
With earneſt inquiſition,
To ſearch, and try and know my ſelf,
And what's mine own condition;
Thus are they rather turn'd than loſt,
For that, which was me fromward,

Hath

Hath now no looks
For other books,
But all my ſight is homeward.

Homeward, indeed, my blindneſs calls,
My certain change foretelling,
For ſith my windows be ſhut up,
I muſt look to remove my dwelling;
There is an houſe, not made with hands,
The joyes of whoſe fruition
My Faith gives me
Good hopes to ſee;
For the end of Faith, is Viſion.

And thither, to be remov'd from hence,
I may well count a kindneſs,
For though I here have loſt my ſight,
Yet there I ſhall loſe my blindneſs.
Thus he, that out of dark brought light,
To bleſſings turns our croſſes,
Where his love takes,
His goodneſs makes
Us gainers by our loſſes.

AN
Addreß to Blindneß;

Wherein are contained ſeverall grounds of chearfull Patience for those that be in that condition.

WElcome Blindneß, for his ſake,
from whom thou didſt comiſſion take
To ſeize upon my watchfull ſpyes,
And by degrees to cloud mine eyes:
Becauſe thine Orders were from God,
I'le not repine, but kiß my Rod.

No little Birds to earth decline,
Without a Providence Divine;
I may as well conclude from thence,
No Blindneß, but by Providence;
All riſing thoughts I therefore ſhun,
And only ſay, Gods will be done.

From him the Holy Lord of Might,
There's nothing can proceed but right,
Or light on me, but what is juſt,
For what am I, but ſinfull duſt?

The

The Provocation then being from me;
Submissive Patience will become me.

Besides, God would be understood,
In all he sends, to seek our good,
His bitter Pills intend our health,
And outward losses inward wealth,
His very chiding comes from kindness,
And therefore once more welcom blindnes.

With aged Eli thou didst dwell,
And Father Isaac knew thee well,
With Jacob too thou didst abide,
And other Holy men beside,
Why then should I deny submission,
When Saints have been in my condition?

Thy first appearance calls thee foe,
But better known, thou art not so;
At least there's more of friend in thee,
Than at the first there seems to be:
For though the body may defie thee,
The soul may prove a gainer by thee.

The clouds Ecclipse all earthly beauties,
And yet obstruct not holy duties;
For I can hear, discourse, and pray,
Though thou hast took my sight away,

Thou

Thou rather furtherest such transactions,
In helping to prevent distractions.

Thy mantle muffles up the sight,
And yet obscures no inward light,
Nay, thou giv'st leisure, and occasions
For many heavenly meditations,
And canst with faith and hope agree,
Why then should I fall out with thee?

'Twixt faith and thee hath ever been
Consent; for that's of things not seen;
A Christians walking suits thee right,
For that's by faith, and not by sight;
And, for a Saint, the best ingredients
Are hood-winkt faith, and blind obedience

When once God speaks, man should be mute,
Believe, obey, and not dispute,
For of his word the truth and right
Hath no dependence on our sight;
Thou canst not therefore, I confess,
Either hinder faith or holiness.

Nor canst thou bar me from his love,
Whom no mans face could ever move;
Or me from loving him again,
That doth invisible remain;

And

And I, though blind, may have a being,
Where blindneſs ſhall be turn'd to ſeeing.

In Heaven, I know, there dwells no night,
But glorious and eternal light,
For which thou mak'ſt me pant and pray,
And preſſeſt me to ſigh and ſay,
O come the time, when I ſhall never
Be blind at all, but ſee for ever.

Thou alſo teacheſt me to know
The emptineſs of things below;
For now by thee I plainly find,
That all this World is all but wind,
And from the Scepter to the Hod,
There's nothing worthy love but God.

In ſumme, ſeeing that from God thou art,
For good; and not without deſert:
No foe to faith, or hope, or love,
But rather friend to things above,
Contented I may well remain,
Till Heaven reſtore my ſight again.

THE

THE COMPLAINT

and the Suit of a Sinner.

Ah Me!

WHat a wretch ſhould I be,
Should I ſuffer what I ſee
That my ſins do require!
There be none of them ſo ſmall,
Which for vengeance do not call,
And for bitterneſs, and gall,
Loſs of body, ſoul, and all
In the pit of woe and thrall.
'Tis no leſs than endleſs fire,
That in juſtice is their hire.

Sin, Sin,
With my life did begin,
And I have liv'd therein
All my daies heretofore;

Sins

Sins of heart, head, hand and tongue,
Through my life all along,
Like a thread have they run
Binding me to be undone;
Many and great are they grown,
And if Justice scan the score,
I must perish evermore.

Poor I,
Whither now shall I fly
To be set at liberty
From this depth of misery?
'Tis not Sea, 'tis not shoar,
'Tis not all the Indian *o're,*
'Tis not Rome *with all her store,*
That hath salve to cure my sore,
Onely One can me restore.
To that Altar I will fly,
There I'le live, there I'le dye.

Save, Save,
Mercy, Lord, do I crave,
Other Refuge none I have,
But thy mercy to implore;

O look upon me through that ſide,
Which the ſpear made ſo wide,
Look on me through him that died,
And for ſin was Crucified,
Grant his wounds my ſins may hide,
And his blood croſs my ſcore
And I ask but one thing more.

Grace, Grace,
In my heart do thou place,
That I may run the race,
Which thy Laws do require,
Give me, Lord, I humbly ſue,
Grace to know, grace to do,
Grace that may me ſo renew,
And confirm, and perfect too,
That, when death ſhall claim his due,
Grace in Glory may expire,
This is all my deſire.

A N

AN EPITAPH.

LIfe leads to death, ſo nature ſaith;
Death is the way to Life, ſo Faith.
Thus let us think of both. Say I,
He that deſires to live, muſt dye.

A MEDITATION UPON THIS EPITAPH.

LIfe is the way to Death, (ſaith,
The common courſe of Nature
Death is the way to Life,
This is a truth maintain'd by Faith.

Even

Even Nature then
May mind us men
To look for an alteration;
But against that day
'Tis Faith must lay
Sure grounds of Consolation.

He that would live, must dye,
So Faith and Nature both do teach,
In words they both comply,
And yet in sense they make a breath;
Who love this breath,
Must look for death,
Thus Nature doth explain it;
Faith thus: who love
That Life above,
Must dye before obtain it.

But 'tis by both confest
All Adam's *race are born to dye,*
The worst, and eke the best,
The Rich, the Poor, the low the high,
Against deaths dart
The wisest heart

Could

Could never yet find shield,
The stout must stoop,
The daring droop,
And all be forc'd to yield.

And yet there's hope in Death
For such as do in Christ believe,
For when they lose this breath
They truly do begin to live;
Their worst is past,
For even the last
Omega, *well to dye,*
The Alpha *is*
To joy and bliss
In Heavens Eternity.

To thee I therefore Cry,
Who dost both Grace and Glory give,
Teach me, Lord, how to dye
That so I may be taught to live.
While I dwell in clay
I humbly pray
For an Heavenly Conversation;
And when I must
Return to dust
Lord shew me thy Salvation.

FINIS.

A MEDITATION ON PSALM the CXIX.

Verse the 71.

IT's good to be Afflicted, David *saith*,
And 'tis a truth, that's worthy of our Faith;
For in the worst, God doth intend our best,
And can convert our trouble to our rest:

If grief and pain, should not sometime annoy us,
Prosperity, might possibly destroy us;
But, to full bodies, fasting proves a friend;
Ranck savors profit, where perfumes offend:

Thus he, by whom the day spring from the dark,
make our Rubbs, directors to the mark;

He makes by marring, rowls [illegible] from moss;
Racks to refine, melts, to consume our dross:

He casteth off, but, 'tis to dra[illegible]
He throws us down, only, to raise [illegible]gher;
He pares off part, but, to preserve the whole,
And wounds the [illegible] to save the Soul:

Repine not then, to sup of sorrows cup,
Nay, think not much, if God say, drink it up;
'Tis wholesome, though unpleasant to the taste,
'Tmay hurt at present, but 'twill heal at last.

When cutting cure's, when losses turn to gain,
When crosses blesse us, why should we complain?
If binding set us free, blame not the setter,
That Rod deserves a kisse that makes us better.

FINIS.